

Order for the Public Worship of God

I have kept back nothing, but have declared to you
the whole counsel of God. —Acts 20:27

Christ
Church **OPC**

Biblical **Confessional** **Reformed**

6 September 2020

*Be thoughtful, be silent, be reverent;
for here we meet with a holy God.*

*Before the service, speak to the Lord;
during the service, let the Lord speak to you;
after the service, speak to one another.*

About Receiving Communion

All who trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, are baptized members in good standing of congregations that proclaim the gospel, are repentant of their sin and are at peace with their brothers and sisters in Christ are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper, feeding on the grace of God by faith. If you have not put your trust in Christ, please allow the elements to pass you by and take this opportunity to meditate on the meaning of the Gospel.

A Word to Parents: Baptized children are invited to the table after they have made a profession of faith and have been received as communing members by the church to which their parents belong.

As instituted by our Lord, wine is the element used in the Lord's Supper to show forth his blood shed on our behalf (Mark 14:23–25; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:20–21, 25; 1 Tim 4:3–4). If, however, for reasons of conscience, you are not able to participate using wine, grape juice is provided in the center of the tray. Also, gluten-free crackers are available for those who cannot eat bread.

Reflection

God whispers to us in our well-being; he shouts to us in our suffering.

— C. S. Lewis
The Problem of Pain

Circumstances may appear to wreck our lives and God's plans, but God is not helpless among the ruins. Our broken lives are not lost or useless. God's love is still working. He comes in and takes the calamity and uses it victoriously, working out his wonderful plan of love.

— Eric Liddell
The Disciplines of the Christian Life

In America, Christians pray for the burden of suffering to be lifted from their backs. In the rest of the world, Christians pray for stronger backs so they can bear their suffering.

— Dave Dravecky
When You Can't Come Back

Suffering times are a Christian's best improving times.

— Author unknown

We Prepare to Meet with God

Prelude

Who Trusts in God, a Strong Abode

Who trusts in God, a strong abode
in heav'n and earth possesses;
Who looks in love to Christ above,
No fear his heart oppresses.
In you alone, dear Lord, we own
sweet hope and consolation:
Our shield from foes, our balm for woes,
our great and sure salvation.

Though Satan's wrath beset our path,
And worldly scorn assail us,
While you are near we will not fear,
Your strength shall never fail us:
Your rod and staff shall keep us safe,
and guide our steps forever;
Nor shades of death, nor hell beneath,
Our souls from you shall sever.

In all the strife of mortal life
our feet shall stand securely;
Temptation's hour shall lose its pow'r,
for you shall guard us surely.
O God, renew, with heav'nly dew,
our body, soul, and spirit,
Until we stand at your right hand,
through Jesus' saving merit.

God Calls Us

Trinitarian Confession and Salutation

Minister: We are gathered in the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Matthew 28:19*

**All: Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!** *Psalm 124:8*

Minister: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father
and Christ Jesus our Lord! *1 Timothy 1:2b*

All: Amen.

Call to Worship

Psalm 113:1-3

Minister: Praise the LORD!

**All: Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!**

Minister: Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore!

**All: From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same,
the name of the LORD is to be praised!**

▲ Hymn 62

My soul finds rest in God alone,
My rock and my salvation,
A fortress strong against my foes,
And I will not be shaken.
Though lips may bless and hearts may curse,
And lies, like arrows, pierce me,
I'll fix my heart on righteousness;
I'll look to Him who hears me.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,
my Delight and my Reward.
Everlasting, never failing:
My Redeemer, my God.*

Continues...

Find rest, my sou,l in God alone.
Amid the world's temptations.
When evil seeks to take a hold,
I'll cling to my salvation.
Though riches come, and riches go,
Don't set your heart upon them.
The fields of hope in which I sow
Are harvested in heaven.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,
my Delight and my Reward.
Everlasting, never failing:
My Redeemer, my God.*

I'll set my gaze on God alone,
And trust in Him completely,
With ev'ry day pour out my soul;
And He will prove His mercy.
Though life is but a fleeting breath,
A sigh too deep to measure,
My King has crushed the curse of death,
And I am His forever.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,
my Delight and my Reward.
Everlasting, never failing:
My Redeemer, my God.*

▲ **Prayer of Petition and Adoration**

God Cleanses Us

Call to Confession of Sin

Psalm 51:7, 17

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Corporate Confession of Sin and Supplication for Mercy (*unison*)

God of mercy, whose Son, Jesus Christ,
longs to gather us in the wide embrace of his love,
we confess that we have been wayward children.

We have disobeyed your commands;
our ears have been deaf to your call;
our hearts have been cold to your love.

In thought, in word, and in deed
we have hurt others and dishonored your name.

In your great mercy,
pardon our disobedience.

In your great mercy,
forgive us our sin.

In your great mercy,
receive us yet again as your well-beloved children,
not because we are worthy but for the sake of Jesus Christ,
who loved us and gave himself for us.

We humbly ask it in his name. Amen.

⤴ **Declaration of Forgiveness**

Colossians 1:21–23a

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, [Jesus] has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.

⤴ **The Doxology (#731)**

Trinity Hymnal

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host:
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

God Consecrates Us

Prayer for Illumination

Reading of Scripture

Daniel 6

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. ³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. ⁵ Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

⁶ Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. ¹¹ Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. ¹² Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, “O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?” The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of

the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.”¹³ Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

¹⁴ Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a

decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear
before the God of Daniel,
for he is the living God,
enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion shall be to the end.
27 He delivers and rescues;
he works signs and wonders
in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.”
28 So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius
and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

▲ **Hymn 402** Abide with Me: Fast Falls the Eventide

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide:
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour;
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no wait, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Sermon Text: Acts 25 *When Life is Just Too Hard and Unfair*

¹ Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. ² And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, ³ asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. ⁴ Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. ⁵ “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.”

⁶ After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. ⁷ When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. ⁸ Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” ⁹ But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” ¹⁰ But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹ If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” ¹² Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”

¹³ Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. ¹⁴ And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix, ¹⁵ and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. ¹⁶ I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. ¹⁷ So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the

next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. ¹⁸ When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. ¹⁹ Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. ²⁰ Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. ²¹ But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.” ²² Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.”

²³ So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. ²⁴ And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵ But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”

Prayer of Intercession

▲ Hymn

Come, My Soul, and Bless the Lord

Come, my soul, and bless the Lord,
All within me bless his name!
Come, my soul, and bless the Lord;
And forget not all his grace:
All your sins the Lord forgives,
All your sicknesses he heals.
He redeems you from the pit;
His compassion he reveals.

He will crown you with his love,
With his tender mercies true,
And he fills your life with good;
Like the eagle, youth renews.
God, the righteous judge, defends
All oppressed and broken ones,
Showing Moses all his ways
And his deeds to Israel's sons.

For the Lord is slow to wrath,
Full of mercy, full of grace.
He abounds in steadfast love,
Will not chide for endless days.
God will not retain his wrath,
He will not repay our sins;
He will never deal with us
As our wickedness demands.

As the heav'ns are high above
All the earth which God has made,
So to those who fear the Lord
Is his lovingkindness great.
Far as east is from the west,
He removes so far from us
In his great, abounding love,
All our guilt and wickedness.

Continues...

As a father shows his love
Unto all his children dear,
So the Lord displays his love
To those trusting him in fear.
He remembers we are dust,
And our feeble frame he knows.
As for man, his days are like
Tender grass that quickly grows.

So man flourishes and thrives
Like a growing meadow flow'r.
When the wind blows, it is gone,
And its place is known no more.
But the steadfast love of God,
Shown to those who fear his name,
Is from all eternity
To eternity the same.

His unfailing righteousness
Shall to children's children be,
To the ones who cov'nant keep
And his good commandments heed.
God the Lord has set his throne;
In the heavens it shall stand,
And his sov'reign kingdom rules
Over all at his command.

Bless the Lord, you angel hosts,
Mighty ones who do his word,
Who obey his voice and word;
All his servants, bless the Lord!
All his hosts who do his will,
All his works in all his world
Bless the Lord in ev'ry place.
Come, my soul, and bless the Lord.

God Communes with Us

▲ **Affirmation of Faith: Apostles' Creed**

p. 845, *Trinity Hymnal*

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

▲ **The Gloria Patri (#735)**

Trinity Hymnal

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation and Supervision of the Table

1 Corinthians 11:23–29

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Consecration

The minister will lead the congregation in prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer in unison:

**People: Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
 your will be done
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our debts
 as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom and the power
 and the glory forever. Amen.**

Words of Institution

Matt 26:26–28; Mk 14:22–24; Lk 22:17–20

Distribution of the Bread and the Cup

I hear the Savior say,
“Thy strength indeed is small,
Child of weakness, watch and pray,
Find in me thine all in all.”

*Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.*

Lord, now indeed I find
Thy power and thine alone,
Can change the leper’s spots
And melt the heart of stone.

(Refrain)

For nothing good have I
Whereby thy grace to claim;
I’ll wash my garments white
In the blood of Calvary’s Lamb.

(Refrain)

And when, before the throne,
I stand in him complete,
“Jesus died my soul to save,”
My lips shall still repeat.

(Refrain)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon)

Now may your servant, Lord,
according to your word,
depart in exultation.
My rest shall be serene,
for now my eyes have seen
your wonderful salvation.

You did for all prepare
this Gift, so great, so rare,
fulfilling prophets' story;
A Light to show the way
to Gentiles gone astray,
and unto Israel's glory.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

God Commissions and Blesses Us

The Collection of Alms and Tithes

Hymn 691 It is Well with My Soul

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
“It is well, it is well with my soul.”

*It is well (It is well)
With my soul; (with my soul;)
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
And has shed his own blood for my soul.

(Refrain)

My sin—O the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

(Refrain)

O Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend,
“Even so”—it is well with my soul.

(Refrain)

▲ The Benediction

▲ Congregation stands as able

Sermon Notes

Acts 25

When Life is Just Too Hard and Unfair

Welcome to Christ Church OPC

We are delighted that you have chosen to join us for worship! It is our sincere hope and prayer that you will know and experience the love, power, and presence of our King and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you are visiting, please take a moment to fill out one of our visitor cards and place it in the collection plate. If you desire any additional information, or if there are ways in which we can pray for you or be of service to you, please let us know. We count it a privilege to serve our community in the name of Christ!

About Our Church

Standing in the great biblical and evangelical tradition of the Protestant Reformation, Christ Church is a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). We are committed to the Bible as the Word of God, the Reformed Faith, and the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.



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Staff

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Elders: Rod Alexander, Scott Peterson
Deacons: Doug Boswell, Leng Ea, Rod Miller
Diaconal Aide: Adam Grimes